

# California Mediterranean Research Learning Center



The California Mediterranean Research Learning Center (CMRLC) is an integral program of three units of the National Park System: Cabrillo National Monument, Channel Islands National Park, and Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. These three NPS areas represent outstanding examples of Southern California's Mediterranean Biome. Southern California is one of only five locations in the world containing Mediterranean habitat, and its endemics are at risk due to loss of habitat and the impacts of substantial human use and invasive species.

## Purpose

The purpose of the CMRLC is to establish and sustain a cooperative management, research, and education effort that supports sound science in the park's ecosystems while involving and educating the public through citizen science opportunities.

## Research and Management

The CMRLC will facilitate and support a broad scope of research on the terrestrial and oceanic aspects of the Mediterranean Biome, but focus on promoting research directed specifically at addressing management needs. Topics such as the effects of surrounding urbanization and over-utilization on habitat and species, the management of parks in the face of growing urbanization, effects of isolation due to fragmentation of habitat on inland and island communities, effects of non-native species, societal attitudes towards protected areas and wildlife, and history of humans and their cultures in this Mediterranean Biome. A broad goal of this research is to uncover those practices and principles that can support harmonious interaction between humans and the natural community.

A better understanding of how to resolve our own management challenges can be obtained through local and international research partnerships. Indeed, the worldwide distribution of Mediterranean ecosystems provides an opportunity for this CMRLC to collaborate with research scientists internationally. Comparative experiences and lessons learned across a broad reach of cities from Perth to Cape Town to Los Angeles to Barcelona and Beirut will be of use to civic leaders and planners. The fact that Cape Town, South Africa faces the same problem with wildfires as Los Angeles and San Diego, suggests that there are lessons to be shared. Promoting comparative research among teams of international scientists may serve to disclose very basic elements of the dynamic relationship between humans and the Mediterranean environment.

## Citizen Science



By facilitating research, the CMRLC can enhance educational opportunities. Indeed, the CMRLC hopes to engage the 20 million or so people who reside in Southern California in learning about and protecting the sensitive Mediterranean Biome in which they live. To accomplish its goal, the CMRLC will use a broad set of partnerships to create and distribute educational opportunities across a host of venues, traditional and non-traditional. Museums, zoos, universities, science centers, research conferences, virtual websites, schools, and media outlets will all be used to disseminate valuable educational information to the public.



## Research Learning Center Goals

- Support and facilitate the collection of information to solve resource management issues and aid in the management of protected areas
- Aid in the development of a better understanding of the ecology of Mediterranean ecosystems through research and education
- Develop a public understanding and appreciation of Mediterranean ecosystems and threats to their long-term

## Implementation and Process

### Research

To facilitate and increase research opportunities in the network of parks, the CMRLC will provide information to researchers to help reduce logistical and regulatory challenges, increase their understanding of park natural resources and resource management challenges, and potentially aid in providing funding for Park-based research

Logistical and regulatory challenges vary by park. However, transportation to and within the park, permitting, and housing issues are common to all. The development of the web-based *Research Prospectus* will provide detailed information about how to get to the parks, maps to sites, facilities available, and contact information. Potential researchers will also be guided to the Park permitting page and online application process. A discussion of park natural and cultural resources will also be included in the *Research Prospectus*. This will aid in the researcher's understanding of what resources are available and what resource challenges are faced by each park.



### Citizen Science

Opportunities for citizen science will occur within the parks and through the development of partnerships. These educational opportunities will occur through development of internships, workshops, and educational outreach materials on the website and at park visitor's centers, museums, science centers and other entities.

## Contact Information

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